# FLORISTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF ONION PEAK WITH SADDLE MOUNTAIN, CLATSOP COUNTY, OREGON

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Clatsop County occupies the northwestern tip of Oregon, bordered on the north by the Columbia River and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It lies entirely within the Coast Range physiographic province, which in Oregon is a forested region divided between the coastal *Picea* sitchensis zone and the adjacent Tsuga heterophylla zone of vegetation (Franklin and Dyrness, 1969). In the geographical center of Clatsop County rises a three-humped, bald, rocky prominence known as Saddle Mountain, 1000 m in elevation and one of the highest peaks in the northern Oregon Coast Range. The flora of this mountain is of particular interest because of the disjunct occurrence here of a number of species from the Olympic Mountains, the Washington and Oregon Cascades, the Columbia River Gorge, and the high Coast Range peaks to the south (Detling, 1954). Saddle Mountain is presently considered to be the southern limit of distribution of several taxa in the Coast Range, including Cladothamnus pyrolaeflorus, Dodecatheon pulchellum, Anemone multifida, Douglasia laevigata, Erigeron peregrinus ssp. peregrinus, Lewisia columbiana var. rupicola, Synthyris schizantha, and Prenanthes alata. Two taxa are assumed to be endemic to this peak: Cardamine pattersonii and Saxifraga occidentalis var. latipetiolata.

While Saddle Mountain is easily reached by road and trail, there are several other less accessible high peaks in Clatsop County that might be expected to have a similar flora. These mountains form an almost straight northeast-southwest diagonal across the county, reaching the ocean just south of the Tillamook County line. The map in Figure 1 shows all the areas above 762 m elevation and the principal named peaks. The geology of these highlands is similar, with rocky pinnacles, cliffs, and ridges formed by deeply weathered basalt breccias of Miocene volcanic intrusives that penetrate the surrounding early Tertiary sediments (Schlicker et al., 1972). These bare rocky summits stand above a continuous blanket of forest and support a varied herbaceous and shrubby flora of species adapted to cliffs, ravines, talus, and forestborder habitats. The boreal elements in this flora are probably favored by the cold, stormy winters and the protection from high summer temperatures afforded by shaded north slopes, seepage moisture, and especially by frequent summer fogs off the nearby ocean (Detling, 1954).

Recent logging operations on private land around Onion Peak, 24 km southwest of Saddle Mountain and 934 m in elevation, now allow easy

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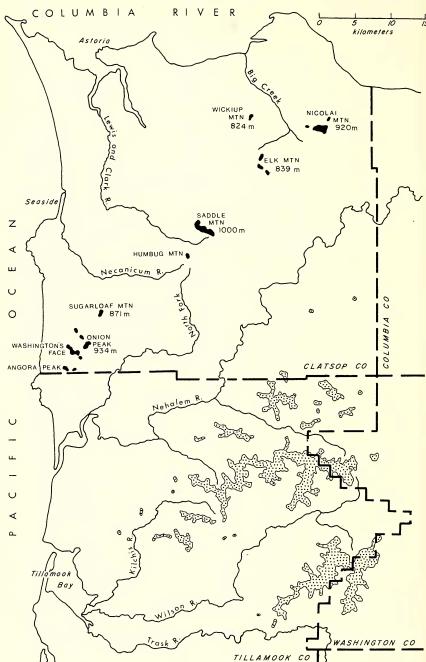


Fig. 1. Map of Clatsop County, Oregon, and parts of adjacent counties. Areas over 762 m elevation are shown in black for Clatsop County and are stippled for Tillamook and Washington Counties.

access to this, the second highest point in Clatsop County. In 1971 and 1972 I made four collecting trips to Onion Peak; the resulting specimens are deposited at Oregon State University and are the basis for the list of species given in this report. The first botanical exploration of Onion Peak was on July 7, 1967, by Dr. L. R. Heckard, who has very kindly allowed me to include his collections (now deposited in OSC and UC) in this report. I have not heard of any other plant collections from this mountain. While it is hoped the present plant list is relatively complete, one must admit that there are inaccessible cliffs and much rugged topography in the vicinity of Onion Peak, so that further additions to the list can be expected from future exploration.

## DESCRIPTION OF ONION PEAK

Onion Peak is the highest point on a series of knobby ridges that include Washington's Face and Angora Peak. The north and west faces of these ridges mostly form precipitous cliffs, with deep weathering along vertical joints in the basalt. Onion Peak is an approximately conical monolith, whose blocky north and west slopes were once forested from base to summit, but whose south and east faces are massive slopes of bare rock. From a base at 730 m elevation, these smooth cliffs rise steeply for 120-150 m and then slope somewhat more gently to the summit. In the top 30-60 m, where the slope is only 30°-40°, there is an area about two acres in extent on which extensive patches of thin soil occur, supporting a fairly rich flora of grasses, forbs, and cryptogams. This small "bald" is a miniature of the similar but much larger areas on Saddle Mountain, which were included in a survey of Coast Range "balds" by Aldrich (1972). The open summit area on Onion Peak gives way abruptly on the north and west sides to a forest of Abies amabilis and Tsuga heterophylla, with only a narrow shrub border of Cladothamnus pyrolaeflorus and Acer circinatum. No grassy balds were observed on the adjacent high ridges of Washington's Face or Angora Peak; however, Sugarloaf Mountain, 5.2 km to the north and 871 m high, appears (through binoculars) to have a small bald on its summit,

The "forest" on the upper north and west sides of Onion Peak is a pitiful remnant of a few hundred trees, left after clear-cutting of all the surrounding area during the period of 1960–1965. The trees removed during these logging operations were principally Thuja plicata, Abies sp. (probably Abies amabilis for the most part, though perhaps some A. procera), and Tsuga heterophylla; smaller stands of old-growth Pseudotsuga menziesii occurred on some of the slopes, while the forests of Picea sitchensis at lower elevations to the west had mostly been logged earlier in the century (Dennis Rittenback, pers. comm.). Small stands of uncut forest are left on Washington's Face and the northwest spur of Onion Peak, but the latter is now finally being harvested! The almost complete removal of forest from even the steepest hillsides and

ridge-tops exposes these highlands to severe erosion. The present vegetation on the clear-cuts is mainly *Rubus spectabilis*, and tree regeneration is scarcely evident.

## RELATIONSHIPS OF THE FLORA

The grassy bald on Onion Peak is isolated from Saddle Mountain by about 22.5 km of intervening lower-elevation forest. In species composition, their floras have many similarities together with some interesting differences, as will be discussed below. The accompanying map (fig. 1) shows that to the southeast of Onion Peak, in Tillamook and Washington Counties, there are large areas of the Coast Range that exceed 762 m elevation. These mountains, which are at the upper reaches of the Kilchis, Wilson, and Trask Rivers, are within the infamous Tillamook Burn and were devastated by a series of wildfires beginning in 1933. Because the summits of these peaks have been very little visited by botanists, it is not known whether or not the distinctive elements on Onion Peak and Saddle Mountain occur there as well. For comparing the latter two floras, a revised list of 268 taxa for Saddle Mountain (Chambers, unpublished) was used, which differs from Detling's list (1954) by numerous corrections and additions.

The list of vascular plants for Onion Peak is limited to collections made above 730 m; it does not include weeds and adventives that have come in along logging roads or in the clear-cuts. A few of the species were not found on Onion Peak, but were on Washington's Face in a bit of remaining forest at 850 m elevation, about 1.2 km southwest of the peak. The abbreviation "SM" indicates that the species is known to occur on Saddle Mountain. If Clatsop County is either the southern limit or northern limit for a species, in the Coast Range, this is stated in the list. The great majority of species extend both north and south of Onion Peak, either in the Coast Range or the Cascades, or both. The following discussion will call attention to some notable features of the flora. Nomenclature is based principally on Hitchcock et al. (1955–1969).

# LIST OF TAXA FROM ONION PEAK

ACERACEAE: Acer circinatum Pursh (SM); A. glabrum Torr. var. douglasii (Hook.) Dippel (SM).

ARALIACEAE: Oplopanax horridum (J. E. Smith) Miq. (SM).

BERBERIDACEAE: Berberis aquifolium Pursh (see discussion); B. nervosa Pursh (SM); Vancouveria hexandra (Hook.) Morr. & Dcne. (SM).

BETULACEAE: Alnus sinuata (Regel) Rydb. (SM).

CAPRIFOLIACEAE: Sambucus racemosa L. ssp. pubens (Michx.) House (SM).

CARYOPHYLLACEAE: Arenaria macrophylla Hook. (SM); A. rubella (Wallenb.) Smith (SM, see discussion); Cerastium arvense L.

(SM); Stellaria crispa Cham. & Schlecht. (SM).

COMPOSITAE: Achillea millefolium L. (SM); Anaphalis margaritacea (L.) Benth. & Hook. (SM); Arnica latifolia Bong. (SM); Cirsium edule Nutt. (SM); Erigeron peregrinus (Pursh) Greene ssp. peregrinus (SM, southern limit, see discussion); Eriophyllum lanatum (Pursh) Forbes (SM); Hieracium albiflorum Hook. (SM); Prenanthes alata (Hook.) Dietr. (SM, southern limit); Senecio flettii Wieg. (southern limit; see discussion).

CRASSULACEAE: Sedum oreganum Nutt. (SM); S. spathulifolium Hook. (SM).

CRUCIFERAE: Cardamine pattersonii Hend. (SM, endemic; see discussion); Erysimum as perum (Nutt.) DC. (SM).

CUPRESSACEAE: Thuja plicata D. Don (SM).

CYPERACEAE: Carex mertensii Bong. (SM).

ERICACEAE: Cladothamnus pyrolaeflorus Bong. (SM, southern limit); Gaultheria shallon Pursh (SM); Menziesia ferruginea Smith (SM); Pyrola picta Smith; P. uniflora L. (SM); Vaccinium ovalifolium Smith (SM); V. parvifolium Smith (SM).

FUMARIACEAE: Dicentra formosa (Andr.) Walp. (SM).

GRAMINEAE: Agrostis diegoensis Vasey (SM); A. exarata Trin. spp. minor (Hook.) C. L. Hitchc. (SM); Bromus vulgaris (Hook.) Shear var. eximius Shear; B. vulgaris var. vulgaris (SM); Calamagrostis nutkaensis (Presl) Steud. (SM); Danthonia californica Boland. (see discussion); Deschampsia elongata (Hook.) Benth. (SM); Elymus glaucus Buckl. (SM); E. hirsutus Presl (SM); Festuca rubra L. (SM, see discussion); Glyceria elata (Nash) M. E. Jones; Koeleria nitida Nutt. (SM; =K. cristata Pers., an illegitimate name); Melica subulata (Griseb.) Scribn. (SM); Phleum alpinum L. (SM); Poa gracillima Vasey (SM); P. marcida A. S. Hitchc. (SM); Trisetum cernuum Trin. (SM).

HYDROPHYLLACEAE: Hydrophyllum tenuipes Heller (SM); Romanzoffia sitchensis Bong. (SM).

IRIDACEAE: Iris tenax Dougl. ex Lindl. (SM); Sisyrinchium bermudianum L. (SM).

JUNCACEAE: Luzula campestris (L.) DC. (SM); L. divaricata Wats. (SM; =L. parviflora ssp. fastigiata (E. Mey.) Hamet-Ahti); L. parviflora (Ehrh.) Desv. (SM).

LABIATAE: Prunella vulgaris L. (SM); Stachys mexicana Benth. (SM).

LEGUMINOSAE: Lotus micranthus Benth. (SM).

LILIACEAE: Allium cernuum Roth (SM); A. crenulatum Wieg. (SM); Camassia quamash (Pursh) Greene var. maxima (Gould) C. L. Hitchc. (see discussion); Clintonia uniflora (Schult.) Kunth (SM); Disporum smithii (Hook.) Piper (SM); Erythronium revolutum Smith (SM); Lilium columbianum Hanson (SM); Maianthemum dilatatum

(Wood) Nels. & Macbr. (SM); Scoliopus hallii Wats.; Smilacina racemosa (L.) Desf. (SM); S. stellata (L.) Desf. (SM); Stenanthium occidentale Gray (SM); Streptopus amplexifolius (L.) DC. (SM); S. roseus Michx. (SM); Trillium ovatum Pursh (SM).

LYCOPODIACEAE: Lycopodium clavatum L. (SM).

ONAGRACEAE: Epilobium alpinum L. var. lactiflorum (Hausskn.) C. L. Hitchc. (SM); E. angustifolium L. (SM); E. glandulosum Lehm.; E. minutum Hook. (SM); E. watsonii Barbey (SM).

ORCHIDACEAE: Corallorhiza mertensiana Bong. (SM); Habenaria saccata Greene (see discussion); Listera cordata (L). R. Br. (see discussion).

OXALIDACEAE: Oxalis oregana Nutt. (SM).

PINACEAE: Abies amabilis (Dougl.) Forbes (SM, see discussion); Picea sitchensis (Bong.) Carr. (SM); Tsuga heterophylla (Raf.) Sarg. (SM).

POLEMONIACEAE: Microsteris gracilis (Hook.) Greene (SM); Phlox diffusa Benth. ssp. longistylis Wherry (SM).

POLYGONACEAE: Polygonum nuttallii Small (SM).

POLYPODIACEAE: Adiantum pedatum L. (SM); Athyrium filix-femina (L.) Roth ssp. cyclosorum (Rupr.) C. Chr.; Blechnum spicant (L.) With. (SM); Cryptogramma crispa (L.) R. Br. var. acrostichoides (R. Br.) Clarke (SM); Cystopteris fragilis (L.) Bernh. (SM); Dryopteris austriaca (Jacq.) Woynar (SM); Polypodium glycyrrhiza D. C. Eaton (SM, see discussion); Polystichum munitum (Kaulf.) Presl (SM).

PORTULACACEAE: Claytonia sibirica L. (SM); Lewisia columbiana (Gray) Robins. var. rupicola (English) C. L. Hitchc. (SM, southern limit); Montia parvifolia (Moc.) Greene var. flagellaris (Bong.) C. L. Hitchc. (SM).

PRIMULACEAE: Dodecatheon pulchellum (Raf.) Merrill (SM, see discussion); Trientalis latifolia Hook. (SM).

RANUNCULACEAE: Actaea rubra (Ait.) Willd. (SM); Coptis laciniata Gray; Delphinium menziesii DC. var. pyramidale (Ewan) C. L. Hitchc. (SM); Ranunculus uncinatus D. Don var. parviflorus (Torr.) Benson (SM); Trautvetteria caroliniensis (Walt.) Vail var. occidentalis (Gray) C. L. Hitchc.

RIBESACEAE: Ribes lacustre (Pers.) Poir. (SM).

ROSACEAE: Aruncus sylvester Kostel. (SM); Filipendula occidentalis (Wats.) How. (northern limit, see discussion); Fragaria vesca L. (SM); F. virginiana Duchesne var. platypetala (Rydb.) Hall (SM); Rosa gymnocarpa Nutt. (SM); R. nutkana Presl (SM); Rubus pedatus J. E. Smith (SM); R. spectabilis Pursh (SM); R. ursinus Cham. & Schlecht. (SM).

RUBIACEAE: Galium triflorum Michx. (SM).

SAXIFRAGACEAE: Boykinia elata (Nutt.) Greene (SM); Heuchera

micrantha Lindl. var. diversifolia (Rydb.) R. B. & L. (SM); Saxifraga bronchialis L. var. vespertina (Small) Rosend. (SM); S. caespitosa L. var. emarginata (Small) Rosend. (southern limit, see discussion); S. ferruginea Grah. var. macounii Engl. & Irmsch. (SM); S. mertensiana Bong. (SM); S. oregana How. (SM); Tellima grandiflora (Pursh) Dougl. (SM); Tiarella trifoliata L. (SM); Tolmiea menziesii (Pursh) T. & G. (SM).

SCROPHULARIACEAE: Castilleja hispida Benth. (SM); C. sp. (endemic?, see discussion); Collinsia parviflora Lindl. (SM); Mimulus dentatus Nutt. ex Benth. (SM); Nothochelone nemorosus (Dougl. ex Lindl.) Straw (SM); Orthocarpus pusillus Benth. (SM); Penstemon cardwellii How. (SM, northern limit, see discussion); P. serrulatus Smith (SM); Synthyris schizantha (SM, southern limit).

SELAGINELLACEAE: Selaginella oregana D. C. Eaton (SM); S. wallacei Hieron. (SM).

TAXACEAE: Taxus brevifolia Nutt.

UMBELLIFERAE: Conioselinum chinense (L.) B. S. P. (SM, see discussion); Heracleum sphondylium L. (SM; =H. lanatum Michx.); Lomatium martindalei C. & R. var. flavum (G. N. Jones) Cronq. (SM); Osmorhiza purpurea (C. & R.) Suksd. (SM).

VALERIANACEAE: Valeriana scouleri Rydb. (SM).

VIOLACEAE: Viola adunca Smith (SM); V. glabella Nutt. (SM).

Berberis aquifolium, although widely distributed, has not yet been found on Saddle Mountain. On Onion Peak it occurs as dwarfed individuals at the junction of the bald area with the Cladothamnus shrub border.

Arenaria rubella is a questionable taxonomic entity in this part of Oregon. Seedlings transplanted from Onion Peak in 1972 flowered the first year and have continued to grow vegetatively since then (they survived subfreezing weather outdoors in Corvallis). The plants of Onion Peak and Saddle Mountain appear to be identical with those of the Queen Charlotte Islands that Calder and Taylor (1968) referred to Arenaria stricta Michx. ssp. macra (Nels. & Macbr.) Maguire. They are matted and strongly perennial, and thus do not fit A. stricta as defined by Hitchcock (Hitchcock et al., Part 2, 1964).

Erigeron peregrinus is represented on Onion Peak by a small but somewhat variable population that is best referred to ssp. peregrinus. The rays are white and the phyllaries vary from villous and eglandular to ciliate and dorsally glandular. The Saddle Mountain population is also variable; its rays range from white to violet, and its phyllaries are mostly ciliate with some dorsal glandular puberulence. On Saddle Mountain it grows sympatrically with E. aliceae Howell, which is absent from Onion Peak.

Senecio flettii was an unexpected discovery on Onion Peak; it is a

species of the Olympic Mountains and Washington Cascades and has never been found on Saddle Mountain or elsewhere in Oregon. The identification has been confirmed by Dr. T. M. Barkley.

Cardamine pattersonii is one of the rarest of Oregon's endemic species. It was known previously only from its type locality, Saddle Mountain, where it is quite abundant. On the summit bald of Onion Peak, it grows mainly on moss mats over bare rock, together with other ephemerals like Orthocarpus pusillus, Lotus micranthus, Epilobium minutum, Microsteris gracilis, and Collinsia parviflora. Although annual in its arid natural habitat, C. pattersonii will perennate when moisture is available throughout the summer. This was suspected by Hitchcock (Hitchcock et al., Part 2, 1964) and has been verified in potted transplants from Onion Peak, which formed new, vigorous rosettes from the base of the stem after fruiting and were not killed by freezing temperatures during the winter of 1972–1973.

Danthonia californica unexpectedly has not yet been found on Saddle Mountain, although the grassy bald areas there are much more extensive and varied than on Onion Peak.

Festuca rubra is common in the grassy area of both peaks. The report by Detling (1954) of F. howellii Hack. ex Beal (a synonym of F. viridula Vas.) on Saddle Mountain is probably based on the specimen Ifft 85 (OSC), which is F. rubra misidentified as F. howellii.

Camassia quamash is abundant and very conspicuous in the deeper patches of soil on the Onion Peak bald. It could hardly have been overlooked on Saddle Mountain, so its absence there, although unexplained, is probably significant.

Habenaria saccata and Listera cordata are no doubt to be expected on or near Saddle Mountain, but I have seen no collections. Both H. unalascensis (Spreng.) Wats. and H. greenei Jeps. are common on Saddle Mountain, and L. caurina Piper has been found there. Proving the non-occurrence of particular orchid species, and also of various pyroloid and monotropoid Ericaceae, is difficult. Chimaphila menziesii (R. Br.) Spreng. ought to be found on both peaks, but has not been verified on either; Monotropa uniflora L. was found on Saddle Mountain but not Onion Peak.

Abies amabilis is the only fir in the forest remnants of Onion Peak and Washington's Face; on Saddle Mountain, however, A. procera Rehd. is common and A. amabilis is apparently rare. Another interesting conifer reported from Saddle Mountain is Chamaecyparis nootkatensis (D. Don) Spach, although I personally have not seen it there nor on Onion Peak.

Polypodium glycyrrhiza is the only species of this genus on Onion Peak, whereas on Saddle Mountain it occurs sympatrically with *P. montense* F. Lang.

The Dodecatheon found on Onion Peak and Saddle Mountain is

difficult to identify with assurance. Because of its dark connective and short, dark, free filaments, as well as its broad leaves that taper abruptly into the petiole, it superficially resembles D. jeffreyi Van Houtte of the type found in the Queen Charlotte Islands and southeast Alaska (e.g. Jaques~1500, Prince of Wales Island, OSC). However, the connective is smooth, the stigma is not very much enlarged, and the herbage is glabrous on some plants (although lightly glandular on others). Thompson (1953) specifically discussed the Saddle Mountain population and concluded it could be connected with D. pulchellum~(D.~radicatum~Greene~of~his~treatment) through intermediates in the Columbia River gorge. Since I have no new evidence to offer, I am following Thompson's judgment.

Filipendula occidentalis is a rarely collected Oregon endemic, whose range is now known to extend north to Clatsop County and south to Lincoln County (*Henderson s.n.*, Aug. 4, 1928, Upper Siletz River; ORE). It has not yet been found on Saddle Mountain.

The population of *Saxifraga caespotosa* on Onion Peak better matches var. *emarginata*, of the Olympic Mountains and northward, than var. *subgemmifera* (Engl. & Irmsch.) C. L. Hitchc., found on adjacent Saddle Mountain. The differences are subtle ones of habit and leaf pubescence (Hitchcock et al., Part 3, 1961).

There is an apparently undescribed taxon of *Castilleja*, currently under study by Dr. Noel Holmgren, which was found on Onion Peak but has been searched for without success on Saddle Mountain. It somewhat resembles *C. parviflora* Bong. var. *oreopola* (Greenm.) Ownbey, but has corollas about 32 mm long.

Penstemon cardwellii reaches its northen limit in the Coast Range on Saddle Mountain. Detling's (1954) report of P. menziesii Hook, from there probably was based on Patterson 92 (at ORE), which proves to be P. cardwellii instead.

Conioselinum chinense has been confused with Ligusticum apiifolium (Nutt.) Gray; the latter was listed from Saddle Mountain (Detling, 1954) but this appears to be an error based on the specimen Ifft 136 (OSC), which is C. chinense initially misidentified as Ligusticum.

### Summary

The grassy bald atop Onion Peak is very much smaller than that on Saddle Mountain, but the two share many characteristic species. A partial listing of these is: Arenaria rubella, Cerastium arvense, Erigeron peregrinus, Cardamine pattersonii, Cladothamnus pyrolaeflorus, Poa gracillima, Allium crenulatum, Phlox diffusa ssp. longistylis, Lewisia columbiana var. rupicola, Dodecatheon pulchellum, Saxifraga bronchialis var. vespertina, S. ferruginea var. macounii, Penstemon cardwellii, and Lomatium martindalei var. flavum.

Plants found on Onion Peak but not on Saddle Mountain include:

Berberis aquifolium, Senecio flettii, Danthonia californica, Camassia quamash, Saxifraga caespitosa var. emarginata, and Castilleja sp.

Many species that occur on the open summits of Saddle Mountain are missing from Onion Peak. Selected examples of this group are: Cryptantha intermedia (Gray) Greene, Campanula rotundifolia L., Silene douglasii Hook., Erigeron aliceae How., Agoseris aurantiaca (Hook.) Greene, Rudbeckia occidentalis Nutt., Senecio macounii Greene, Arabis hirsuta (L.) Scop., Poa sandbergii Vas., Phacelia nemoralis Greene, Trifolium longipes Nutt., T. microdon H. & A., T. microcephalum Pursh, Lloydia serotina (L.) Sweet, Erythronium grandiflorum Pursh, Sidalcea hirtipes C. L. Hitchc., Clarkia amoena (Lehm.) Nels. & Macbr., Collomia heterophylla Hook., Polygonum bistortoides Pursh, Douglasia laevigata Gray, Anemone multifida Poir., Thalictrum occidentale Gray, Geum triflorum Pursh, Potentilla gracilis Hook., Lithophragma parviflora (Hook.) T. & G., Saxifraga occidentalis Wats., Rhinanthus cristagalli L., Sanicula graveolens DC., Perideridia gairdneri (H. & A.) Mathias, and Plectritis congesta (Lindl.) DC.

Many of the boreal elements in the flora of Saddle Mountain, as defined by Detling (1954), are now known to be present as well at the summit of Onion Peak. Since the latter is only 6.4 km from the ocean, it may differ climatically from the former, which is 11.3 km farther inland. In sum, however, the flora of Onion Peak is a generous sampling of Saddle Mountain with a few added novelties.

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